

people, clean, honest and well-behaved, and who are in the habit of frequenting some place of worship and taking their children.

The home of the foster-parent must be within two miles of a school, and five of the lady who visits; the religious persuasion of the child (ascertained from the registrar of the workhouse) should be the same as the foster-parent, who must sign a paper promising to take it to church or chapel and train it in habits of industry, truthfulness, honesty and cleanliness. To bring it up with her own children and see that it is happy, well-fed, and suitably lodged, and to mend its clothes and wash them. Four shillings a week is allowed to a foster-parent, and besides this, extra money for school-fees and medicine, while new clothing and medical attendance are provided by the authorities.

A foster-parent taking a child is not allowed to receive relief from the poor-rate during the time the child is with them, and cannot take in more than two children at the same time unless they are of one family, nor are they allowed to take in a child should they have five of their own children. Want of clothing and illness must be reported to the relieving officer when he pays for the weekly board or to the lady-visitor of the boarding-out committee, who must call to see the child once in six weeks, and may call once a week if the boarding-out committee undertake to distribute the weekly payments. A child can be taken away from any foster-parent at once, and is only promised to them for three months, when the agreement has to be re-signed.

The duties of a lady-visitor consist in calling upon the foster-parents (already selected by the boarding-out committee) and asking to see the child, and taking note of its health, cleanliness and general appearance; seeing where it sleeps, and inquiring into its conduct at home and school, and listening to any complaints made by the foster-parent or the child. A report of these visits (which must be made every six weeks and can be made oftener) is drawn up by the lady-visitor and sent in quarterly to the boarding-out committee. A child not visited or reported as to health and condition for four consecutive months is either taken back to the workhouse by the guardians, or the relieving officer is required to make a report of the matter.

The schoolmaster of the school the child attends, besides the school fees, receives a penny a week as a remuneration for drawing up a quarterly paper stating the progress in

learning made, and the general conduct, while the medical officer if called into a case or visiting to see to general condition receives a fee of two shillings and sixpence.

It is left to the discretion of the guardians to allow the boarding-out committee to select homes in their union or in neighbouring parishes, and it has been found by experience that it is better to send the children away from their own parish. They are not so well known then, and escape the influence of idle and impoverished relations, and are more likely to form respectable ties of their own. Some enlightened guardians have under consideration the merciful idea of clothing the boys who remain in the union, or are boarded out, like the children of their own class, as they are anxious to increase self-respect, by freeing them from the stigma of "workhouse brat," so freely bestowed by town boys upon these unfortunate mortals, and all who have their well-being at heart trust that when home influence is combined with the removal of a dress that points out their friendliness, that nothing will remain to hinder their attaining and keeping a position of usefulness and dignity in life.

Arrangements can be made by the boarding-out committee to take under their own supervision the weekly payments to the parents, thus relieving them of the visit of the union officer. This when carried out throws more work upon the lady-visitor, and necessitates a larger staff, but in some towns and villages it is considered to do good. It is more gratifying to the foster-parents to be directly under the supervision of one person, and that a lady, than to be liable to the visits of two people. And the frequent visits made enable the lady to see clearly whether or no the reports of the foster-parent are to be credited, and what the daily habits of life, and tone of thought of the whole establishment is. We all unhappily know who visit the poor, how easily it is to be plausible, sensible, affectionate, etc., when the deception has only to be maintained once in six weeks; but that the play is apt to be ill-sustained, and the real nature appear when the rehearsal is too frequent. It is so necessary to find out the real character and lives led by foster-parents, that no trouble at first is too great, but when once a satisfactory account can be honestly given, a good loving home is found for many a child, and a work begun in the children's hearts that will help them through all their after-lives.

And these children do need pity and love; think of the "deserted child," with no know-

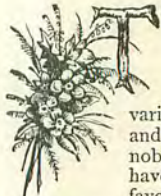
ledge of any relation, of the "orphan child," with both parents dead, or one dead and the other in penal servitude; what a condition is theirs, with no one to care if they live or die; no one to tell their small troubles or hopes to, and no future, but a life of toil to look forward to. Is it any wonder that they take arms against fate, throw back upon their fellow-creatures the scorn visited on them in their childhood, and knowing no pity, no love, and no home, believe that there is none in the world, and so allow the evil born in all our natures to stifle the good, and snatch at every pleasure, whatever punishment it brings with it. Now contrast this early life with that of the ordinary working man's child. The food may be scanty at times, the home rough with the father cross, or the mother irritable; but the child is in its natural place, it has a certain position, and is often treated with great tenderness, and it has someone to look to, and to take its part; it knows well enough that mother may beat it unjustly, but it also knows that the same mother will stand up for it hotly, should a neighbour assail it; and then its days of pleasure, of visiting, of school triumphs, they are none of them made alone, but are shared by brother or sister, mother or friend. With all these aids to a virtuous life withdrawn, can we wonder at the falling into sin of a charity child, and can we hesitate everyone to do a little towards helping them to a share of such simple joys.

In concluding these papers upon the condition of the helpless poor, it is necessary to draw the attention of all would-be workers to the great success of the Brabazon scheme in the workhouses where it has been allowed by the guardians a trial, and to recommend to the attention of our readers the reports published from time to time by the medical officers; but as there are still many unions that decline to allow this scheme to be tried, and yet allow ladies to visit the infirm old men and women, and to read to them, and give them materials for making comforts in the way of warm things for their own use, much can be done in this way to help the helpless, and to cheer the end of lives that so soon will be summoned home. Surely when we all stand as equals before God's throne, the patience under suffering and desertion that these poor people show will weigh much against their sins, and the question that we may have to answer, may be—"Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me."

BLANCHE C. SAWARD.

MY LIFE-WORK.

By "AN OLD GIRL."



HE endeavour to solve the problem "How to reach the masses" has, within the last twenty years, been productive of many and varied schemes, religious, social, and philanthropic, by which noble men and devoted women have striven to raise their less favoured sisters and brothers from the depths of ignorance, poverty, and depravity to better things.

Among recent developments may be specially noted the very marked success of boys' night schools, youths' institutes, and young men's clubs, whether in connection with the parochial work of the Church of England, or on an undenominational basis; pointing the fact that at last all are fully alive to the importance of providing something more than merely religious teaching for the "sons of toil." But to prove that it is possible for a girl but few years over

twenty to originate and carry on, for many years almost single-handed, a work of this character, I am led to relate my own small experiences, that peradventure they may be an incentive to others who are desirous to do what they can, when and how they can, to ameliorate the condition of the poor and needy, even in the face of apparently overwhelming odds.

I commenced work as a Sunday School teacher in a poor and populous parish of a West of England town, when still in my teens. It is curious to note that I was by no means successful with my first class, all boys, so I was given a class of girls, to whom I became attached, as I taught them for some years; still, however, keeping a warm corner in my heart for the lads, whom I longed in vain to reach. But this was a term of probation and preparation for the work which God intended me to do for Him in His own good time.

Meanwhile I had become a total abstainer,

because I found it impossible to prevail upon drunkards to take the pledge as long as I had not myself done so, and I now started a small Band of Hope for boys and girls. But oh, those boys! They resisted and resented all discipline, teased the girls, bothered the teachers, and absolutely refused to keep still for five minutes together. I then tried the plan of taking the girls one week and the boys the next, forming the latter into a sort of temperance regiment; but, alas! they were but unruly soldiers, and scenes of the wildest disorder ensued. I could not count on the assistance of any woman-friend to help me face the young ruffians; so, save for the aid of two working-men, one a mere lad himself, I laboured single-handed. Twice the lights were suddenly extinguished; and had I not placed myself against the door and prevented exit, there would, in all probability, have been a serious accident on the narrow staircase of our mission-room, and it was not until a

policeman arrived on the scene that anything like order was restored.

One winter of work like this knocked me up, but although I was beaten from the field for a time, I was determined not to accept defeat in a good cause, but return to the charge after a brief spell of rest. "Give it up," was the verdict of all my friends, even my good-natured Vicar included, who was kind enough to maintain that I had made "quite a noble effort;" but I was determined, God helping me, not to allow these lads, unruly though they were, to "go to the bad" simply for the want of some friend to understand them. I had read of an Institute for Working Lads somewhere in the East of London: why could not my boys have a little institute too? I was convinced that the great point was to give them something to occupy and interest them, instead of expecting them to sit still and listen; for a boy seldom listens, and never sits still. While revolving matters thus, and praying for a little pecuniary assistance to set things going, the way was suddenly made clear by the receipt of a small sum of money arriving from a most unexpected quarter, with the request that I would devote it to any purpose I thought fit. With this I took a small room in a coffee-house, right in the lowest part of our parish, and there, with only the youth who had in former times helped me to quell his more obstreperous mates, and two of his friends, I opened a night-school once a week to teach the three R's (in which there was not then the proficiency of these latter School-board days), winding up with a Bible lesson and a hymn and prayer. The next winter I devoted two evenings a week to it; introducing such games as draughts, dominoes, lotto, etc., and for three years this continued until the coffee-house was closed. Thereupon we removed to another hard by, and now things began to improve, for a clergyman left in charge of the parish for three months exerted himself to the utmost, and enlisted the sympathy and personal help of two lady-workers; and although the lads were still very rough, we had got them into something like discipline, and they had begun to find that they might come and tell me their troubles. Many, I found, had no home worthy of the name, and all needed more or less a friend. This led me to start, with the pecuniary aid of several interested in my endeavours, a fund, which has enabled me to extend a helping hand to numbers of boys at comparatively little cost considering the lasting good that has been accomplished. From the first I undertook to help any really needy lad who satisfied me that he was desirous to help himself, and my aim is to put each applicant into a suitable way of earning his own living. With this object in view, I find them situations and keep a store of cast-off clothes (the gifts of thoughtful friends) in order to provide them with decent apparel, and advance small loans, which are as a rule honourably repaid; I visit and help in times of sickness, assist with outfit for emigration, and last, but not least, rescue the absolutely destitute by sending them to Dr. Barnardo's Homes. About thirty of my poor boys, varying from five to twenty years of age, have there found a home indeed. I feel I owe a very deep debt of gratitude to my dear friend Dr. Barnardo, not only for taking in my outcasts and thoroughly fitting them for the battle of life, but also for the tremendous insight he has afforded me as to the sanest method of managing them all.

On entering the Home and offices at Stepney the fact that immediately strikes the observant visitor is that here the genus "boy" is understood—neither treated like a machine, nor expected to be an angel; and while splendid discipline is everywhere apparent, yet his present happiness no less than his ultimate good are kept well to the fore.

Space forbids me to go into many details

concerning the various lads to whom by God's help it has been my good fortune to lend a helping hand; but as I write, many bright faces in memory come back to me, some now gaining an honest livelihood in the colonies, who but for timely aid and complete change of environment would be loafing at street corners, if no worse occupied, adding to the rank and file of the vast "unemployed."

Do not, however, imagine, gentle reader, that all my *protégés* have evolved into young heroes. Failures one must expect, and one will have infallibly to meet; but by far the greater number of cases have repaid for their initiative trouble and expense a hundredfold. Perhaps I may claim for the first of the following sketches my most brilliant example of this fact.

Reference has already been made to the youth who from the first had been my good friend, and alone had lent me a hand in trying to stem the torrent of unruliness and impish spirit of mischief with which I had to reckon in my first effort to gather in the ragamuffins and teach them their R's. He was then an errand boy, but very quickly showed such unusual scholastic abilities that his Vicar and Bible-class teacher volunteered to educate him with a view to his ultimately going out as a missionary. He availed himself of these advantages to such good purpose that he became fully qualified to pass into a Church Missionary Society Mission College, and thence, after several years' training, was sent to a far-off station of the mission-field, where he has done admirable work. He has been ordained in the Church of England, and has recently preached on behalf of his special field of labour in several of the churches of his native city.

One evening at the institute a nice-looking lad gave in his name, which, being rather peculiar, prompted me to ask him some leading questions as to his past, when my surmises proved correct. He was the son of a poor woman whom I had often visited, and on her death-bed I had promised to befriend her children as much as I could from their drunken father. I had been unable to keep my word, because the man was continually on the move, and I had lost all clue to his children. The boy, now fifteen, had been abominably treated by his wretched parent, yet he proved pure and honest, and keenly anxious to live respectably, so I got him lodgings in the coffee-house and generally befriended him. The next year I helped him to emigrate and prepare his outfit, and for the last four years we have kept up a regular correspondence. He is now a steady, God-fearing young man, who by perseverance, industry, and thrift has saved enough to take a farm of his own shortly, and I have thus been able to redeem my promise to his poor mother, whose last prayers for him were not in vain.

In Rescue Work, the greatest trouble with which one has to contend is the opposition of relations, mainly through ignorant prejudice, which has to be met by firmness and kindness. Some time since a dreadful tragedy was enacted in our town by a man while drunk, who murdered his wife in a terribly wanton manner, and for this act he was sentenced to death, leaving six young children absolute paupers. One was adopted and two placed in local "Homes," and I offered to place the three others, all boys, in Dr. Barnardo's Homes. This proposal met with the violent disapproval of all their relatives on the ground of possible emigration, although none of them were able to support the children themselves. As a last resource I appealed to the unhappy father through the chaplain of the gaol, who was successful in influencing him in favour of my plan for his bairns, showing him the great good which would accrue to them thereby, and accordingly the man signed a paper virtually

giving the boys into my custody, although he had never to my knowledge seen me. Meanwhile the children had been placed in the Union, so I had next to get a permit from the Board of Guardians for their removal. This they not only granted most willingly, but also paid out of the Poor Fund the whole cost of removal to the "Homes." But my difficulties were by no means over, for when the morning had arrived on which I had arranged to send them up to town, I had quite a scene. Fortunately, I found a tower of strength in one aunt, a little woman with a fund of common sense, who stuck to me right loyally. On entering her room, where I had appointed to fetch her nephews, a hurricane of voices greeted me, babies and women crying, boys roaring, and men vociferating, while my brave but agitated little ally vainly combated her relations' objections. On my inquiry as to the meaning of it all, they flatly refused to let the children go, but I told them in a very few words that I was within my legal rights, and should carry out my plans without further parley. I seized the two elder lads by the hand and beckoned to the little aunt to follow with the youngest, and so we started for the station, fortunately not far away, followed by a motley crowd. Turning a street corner, one of my boys bolted, but here a kind friend came to the rescue, secured him, and helped to see them all off. They had been led to believe that they were being sent to a very dreadful place, so it was with feelings of immense relief that I got my young rebels safely into the departing train, and subsequently got a "wire" from the beadle who met them at the end of their journey. A few weeks afterwards I visited them at Stepney, and found them all well and very happy. They have since been emigrated to Canada, where they have become members of the family of respectable, homely people, of whom they write me in most affectionate terms, and tell me of their happy, useful lives. The relations, who are not really bad, only fearfully prejudiced and ignorant, are now satisfied, and can see the wisdom of my determination to cut them off for ever from their old environment, with which such tragic memories are woven.

I believe emigration rightly directed to be a real boon to our country, with its vast overcrowded centres of activity, and that it is one of the best forms charity can take; yet it is far easier to obtain money for spasmodic charities, such as free teas, buns, blankets, or coals, which alleviate present misery, but do not remove its cause, than for sustained efforts to first fit a boy, and then outfit him for emigration to our colonies, where he is bound to make a living, given the necessary qualifications. I often wish I could confiscate a few of the large sums of money left by well-intentioned folk in years gone by for doles of bread and the like (which often tend to pauperise the recipients) and instead help many a "bonnie laddie" to get to Canada, the land of promise for any industrious, strong, and steady youth.

My last rescue is that of a poor little cripple, whose parents, both drunkards, were leading their children an awful life, when I found them out in the top garret of a very low street. Dr. Barnardo seldom receives a child whose father is living; but in this case, as his means of livelihood were precarious, with four children to support, two of whom were cripples, entirely owing to their mother's drunken fits, I proceeded to get together the necessary facts to fill in my application form. When I called on the mother, she was in a parlous plight from a fall, which she strenuously maintained was the result of "only 'arf a glass of porter with the lady downstairs." I went away in despair to find the father, who that week happened to be driving a cab, and on my demanding the first driver on the cab rank if he knew anyone by the name of H—,

asserted from the box seat that he was "that gentleman;" whereupon I politely requested him to descend and discuss the matter. The upshot of it was that he called at my house the same evening, and signed the necessary papers. When all arrangements were completed, this time, instead of opposition, I found the poor little pallid cripple of twelve years old delighted at the prospect of leaving home, and he hopped along on his crutch by my side in the greatest glee, followed at a distance by his wretched mother. I am happy to say young H— so rapidly improved under such altered conditions of life, that he was soon able to throw away his crutch; and having learned the trade of tailor, almost the only one open to those maimed like himself, he has been sent into Wales, whence he writes many happy letters about his new home with his master, who is in the tailoring trade. This has not been without effect on his old home, for his mother, with whom I am now good friends, has taken the pledge, and is devoted to her other crippled child.

But I am straying from the strictly historical work of our institute. The year after we moved to the other coffee-house, I had to give up everything on account of illness and home-cares, and meanwhile the place was demolished for street improvements, and a new house run up, which had a well-lighted large room that was offered me at a moderate rental, and here we took a firm root, and prospered exceedingly under the name of the Working Youths' Institute. I had now a good staff of workers, and many happy and profitable evenings were spent in that room, to which my old lads refer when we meet now. "Oh, they was 'appy nights we used to spend there, Miss, it was so nice and 'omelike!" Poor boys! so many have never known the real meaning of "home, sweet home." It was no easy task sometimes to keep peace and preserve order; while as for quiet, I had long discovered that if a boy is to enjoy himself, he *must* make a certain amount of noise, and only experience can discriminate between boisterous bluster and the natural hilarity of extreme youth. Here we were for four years, adding to our numbers yearly, although in close proximity to the theatre, music-hall, and countless public-houses. Meanwhile large and commodious parish rooms were in course of erection within a stone's throw of us; and when they were completed, it was generally felt that it would be a good move if we could establish ourselves there, as our room was no longer large enough

for our operations. We wanted to rent the rooms, and preserve the independent and broad religious basis on which we had hitherto worked, but the popular veto of both Vicar and laymen, who were now showing a very real interest about it, was that it should become part of the parish organisation. This being so, I acceded somewhat reluctantly to their wishes. And we moved, under the revised name of St. P— Working Youths' Institute, into two commodious, well-ventilated, block-floored rooms, for which there would be no rent, and freedom withal to carry on the movement as heretofore; but my own feeling remains unaltered. I believe that work among boys of this class is more successful as an auxiliary, and not an integral part of parochial machinery; the interference of those, however well-intentioned, who are not in touch with the boys, is productive of friction.

However, in spite of the altered conditions, which have inevitably increased difficulties, I think our institute still compares favourably in point of usefulness with similar institutions. We have over one hundred members, and an average attendance of thirty-five to fifty per night. The School Board and Technical Schools have removed the actual necessity for the educational side of our work, but I am sorry to say that I find the working-classes down in our parts not at all keen on self-improvement. "Don't know and don't want to," seems to be the spirit of the "West countree." We have, however, a thriving debating class (a source of much amusement and profit), a lending library, draught club, drill and gymnasium class, beside a variety of books, illustrated magazines and papers always at hand for winter recreation, while the swimming and cricket clubs keep our members together during summer time. Regular members pay an entrance fee of 3d. and 1d. a week, but any poor lad over fifteen is welcomed; for though it is not well to press payment in "hard times" or slack work, I strive to inculcate a spirit of independence and self-help.

Discrimination is necessary, and this is aided by a knowledge of the boys' homes, which leads me to mention the deep gratitude that the mothers invariably express. A poor worn-out mother cannot but be glad (when she can no longer send her sons off to "early bed") to feel that outside care and influence is brought to bear upon them, when they are getting beyond her control, and yet are at a most susceptible age. It would amuse my readers

could they hear some of our conversations, for beside our evenings at the institute I am always "at home" to them once a week, when work, wages, clothes, sweethearts, etc., beside the weightier matters of religion, are freely discussed. When a friend of mine asked a boy the other day "who was his chum now?" he promptly replied, "Why, Miss C—, to be sure!" It is friendship and not condescending patronage which they need; and, although every year finds me making greater endeavours to meet them on their own level, I have always been able to command the respect due to myself and workers, and it is most rare even to hear a coarse expression at the institute. They know that I expect that deference which all true men accord women, or I could not, as often happens, be left alone amidst forty to sixty of them without having the remotest sense of discomfort or uneasiness. In fact I am convinced that the conduct of working lads and men generally will compare to their own credit with that of their more highly refined and cultured fellow-men.

It is delightful, when I visit the home of one of my married young men, to have the young wife tell me with pardonable pride, "Oh! my Bill, miss, he *is* so kind to me, he do make me such a good 'usband!" But one must not expect all to be *couleur de rose*, for nothing of this kind can be done without concentrated and consecrated effort, but I want to impress on those desirous of similar work that it *can* be accomplished without any great talents or abilities and at a very small financial outlay.

With the fashion nowadays which would leave religion out altogether, I differ most decidedly, but admit that it requires much tact, wisdom, and patience to know just when and where to introduce it judiciously. Let the teaching often take the form of a friendly chat, and do not bore your young listeners, nor be put out if they are too full of fun to be serious. Be simple, direct, and brief. I have endured much from kind friends who have given my boys a regular sermon. Draw them out as to their special difficulties, and try to put yourself in their place; and while inculcating high principles, don't be too severe on failings, nor disheartened by them. In short, let me sum it all up in Canon Kingsley's well-known lines:

"Do the duty nearest,
Though it's dull meanwhiles,
Helping when we meet them
Lame dogs over stiles."

MAY CARDEN.

A WILFUL WARD.

By RUTH LAMB, Author of "Work, Wait, Win," "Sackcloth and Ashes," etc.

CHAPTER XX.

AT Hollingsby, Kathleen recovered her spirits, and to the dear friends, the sight of whose faces was indescribably welcome to her, she seemed her old, bright self.

"Here," she thought, "John will be out of the way of temptation, and we shall be really happy. I must forget the little things which frightened me. I had been brought up so quietly, I could hardly judge for a man thirteen years my senior, and who knows so much of the gay world. It is not likely we should see eye to eye on such matters. After all, the world's opinions differ from those instilled into me. It calls many things 'mere trifles,' yet my conscience condemns them. I have had enough of it already."

Kathleen longed to resume her old mode of life, only with its usefulness

enlarged, and its responsibilities deepened by a sense of the new obligations on which she had entered. Her husband, however, resumed his old habits also. Kathleen might rusticate to her heart's content, whilst he often "ran up to town" alone. If she complained, his absences became more frequent, and her deep affection proved a weapon for her punishment, because she desired his presence, and had hoped so much from association in their aims and pursuits at home.

She was ready to concede much, but she could not forget that she had given him everything, as well as her love, asking only for affection in return. Without this, she would be poor indeed.

When the time came, she had to consent to a second season in town, though

she dreaded the cost, owing to Mr. Torrance's extravagant estimate as to what must be expended.

Ralph was at school. He had proved exacting and unmanageable during his father's absences.

"I knew long ago that he was a self-willed young rascal," said Mr. Torrance with a laugh. "You tamed him for a time, but, though he loves you better than anyone, he wants a stronger hand than yours, and a wiser head than mine to keep him in his place. I have asked Matheson to find a school for him. He knows more of such places than I do."

This Aylmer did, and bestowed much kindly oversight on Ralph, for which, in his careless fashion, the father was grateful. Indeed John Torrance recognised the nobility and unselfishness of